Conceptualising safety and crime at UK music festivals: A gendered analysis

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Introduction

This chapter brings together conceptual developments across the social sciences to shed light on the underexplored subject of gender and safety at music festivals, a leisure location of growing interest to social scientists and of significant growth within the events industry. Drawing on debates in criminology, sociology, geography and gender studies, the authors consider the intersecting ways in which different social sciences conceptualise the gendering of social space and their applicability to contemporary UK music festivals, with a particular focus on sexual violence. Drawing on data from the UK's first study of gender, safety and crime at music festivals and contextualised in the wider literature on gender, crime, risk and licensed leisure space, the chapter raises questions regarding the distinctive features of commercialised music festivals, the extent to which they can be considered transgressive or countercultural spaces, and what might be the distinctions, if any, of gendered sexual violence within such space. In doing so, this chapter explores how we might start to conceptualise festivals as gendered spaces from a criminological perspective, and calls for a greater incorporation of criminological research within the broader Festival Studies field which can further the empirical and conceptual interrogation of music festivals.

Gender, space and leisure

A growing body of research has been undertaken on perceptions and experiences of 'space', particularly public spaces, and the ways in which social structures and constructs affect consumption and behaviours within them. For criminologists and sociologists, much of this work has focused on examining the relationship between crime, 'deviance', subcultures and

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space, and particularly violence between men in urban spaces such as pubs, clubs and other licensed venues in late modern capitalist consumer society.

Relatedly, feminist scholars across geography and the social sciences for several decades have explored the gendered and sexualised nature of spaces, how they can be experienced differently by women and men, and the ways in which these spaces may restrict or even exclude certain demographic groups. In doing so, this work has highlighted the pervasiveness of sexual harassment and assault in public spaces including for example, public transport (UK Parliament, 2018), the street (Vera-Gray, 2016) and leisure spaces such as sports clubs (Roper, 2016), gyms (Morris, 2019), and of particular importance to this chapter, nightlife venues (e.g. Brooks, 2011; Drinkaware, 2015; Fileborn, 2016; Sheard, 2011; UK Parliament, 2018).

This latter body of work, situated at the borders of leisure studies, feminist and gender studies, criminology, sociology and geography, has been crucial in developing our understandings of the gendered and spatialised 'risks' that women experience across different public sites. In particular, this work has illuminated the role that commercialised heteronormative, sexualised spaces play in contributing to developing 'cultural atmospheres' where localised discrimination based on gender, ethnicity, social class, (dis)ability, sexual identity or other characteristics intersect and converge with broader Western cultures of 'consumption, hedonism, risk, sex and heavy episodic alcohol use' (Kavanaugh, 2015, p.242) which themselves shape and reinforce white heterosexual male power and privilege.

Within the discipline of leisure studies, feminist scholars have highlighted women's unequal access to leisure spaces and opportunities, enforced by patriarchal structures and gendered risks. This is true of most leisure spaces, including sport and outdoor leisure and tourist spaces, where women face higher physical risks of sexual harassment and assault (Kozak et al., 2007; Lepp & Gibson, 2003; Park & Reisinger, 2010; Qi, Gibson, & Zhang, 2009; Yang, Khoo-Lattimore & Arcodia, 2017, p.90) in these traditional masculinized and sexualized spaces (Jordan & Gibson, 2005; Reichel, Fuchs, & Uriely, 2007; Wilson & Little, 2005).

Much of the early work documenting women's unequal access to, and restrictions within, different leisure spaces viewed space as static, and women's experiences and reactions

natural and automatic (Scraton and Watson, 1998). However, since the 1980s there has been a shift to recognising not only the physicality of space, but also the social, cultural and temporal features and constructs of different spaces which produce gender inequality within different sites. Scraton and Watson (1998, p.123) explain that the 'universal explanations of leisure behaviours have been replaced by a concern to acknowledge differences, shifting focus to consumption and the spaces and places in which this occurs.' Aitchison (1999) similarly notes that space was previously viewed as absolute and material, but is now widely recognised as relative and symbolic, providing new ways of seeing and understanding leisure spaces. This marks a clear shift from seeing space as purely physical, to instead recognising it is the socio-cultural and relative nature of space that is important.

Consequently, the synergies between gender relations and spatial relations began to be explored in academic research (Aitchison, 1999), building on feminist activism which began drawing attention to gender and space in the 1970s (e.g. Reclaim the Night marches, women's refuges). Early feminist geographers (e.g. Valentine, 1990; Pain, 1991) provided foundational research into the gendered nature of spaces, from their design to their function, which were built, constructed and maintained within the wider patriarchy. As Valentine (1990) noted, the spatial designs and segregation of various public spaces existed to ensure men's ability to exert control over women's use of space, but it is not purely the design of the space that is responsible. Rather, it is the social relations within particular spaces that enable the regulation and control of women's bodies. Similarly, the social and cultural structures which shape gendered perceptions, understandings and experiences of spaces are not static; they vary across time, space, place and between cultures and contexts (Massey, 1994). Green and Singleton (2006, p.855) argue the gendered nature of spaces and places both 'reflects and has effects back on' the ways in which gender is constructed and understood. Moreover, these gendered constructions are sexed, classed and racialised, restricting access to women who do not conform to white, heterosexual middle-class ideals (Griffin et al., 2012).

One of the primary areas of academic interest has concerned women's fear in public spaces and, to a lesser extent, their experiences of sexual harassment and violence. Much of this research has drawn on national victimisation surveys or sources of quantitative data to estimate the fear of crime and actual experiences. This research has consistently shown that

women have high levels of fear, particularly concerning sexual harassment and violence in public spaces, compared with men (for reviews and findings see Pain, 1991, 2001; Stanko, 1995). The earlier work in this area focused on public places such as parks and streets and was concerned with social and environmental factors which increased or decreased fear (e.g. lighting, wooded areas, presence of other people) (Jorgensen et al., 2012). Comparisons were frequently made between women's fear of sexual violence compared to their actual risk, reporting that women disproportionately feared these offences. However, as described earlier in this chapter contemporary research has evidenced that sexual harassment, and assault, are frequent features of women's lives in both public and private spaces.

Violent attacks and incidents of sexual harassment can suggest to women that they are not meant to be in certain spaces at certain times and can have the effect of excluding women from various spaces or regulating their behaviour within them (Rose, 1993; Beebeejaun, 2017). It is well documented that women (and other marginalized or targeted groups) restrict and adjust their behaviour and movement through public spaces in order to manage this fear of encountering sexual violence in public spaces (Pain, 1991; Stanko, 1990; Vera-Gray, 2018). For example, women mentally map certain places in relation to their fear of male violence (Valentine, 1989). Much of this 'safety work' involves the hyper-vigilant woman making subtle behaviour adaptations involving the way certain places and times are negotiated (Vera-Gray, 2018; Valentine, 1989).

Pain (1997) described some of the 'precautions' women take to avoid violent victimisation, ranging from not answering the door to avoiding certain public places (particular streets or areas) to their choice of employment, leisure and social activities (Pain, 1997, p.234). As Hollander (2001, p.105) found, 'women report constantly monitoring their environment for signs of danger, hesitating to venture outside alone or even in the company of other women, asking men for protection, modifying their clothes…and restricting their activities…These strategies are simply part of daily life as a woman.' Thus, it may be that the incidence of violence would be higher if it were not for the safety work women undertake, as a result of their fear of crime in public spaces. Conversely, violence may be lower if greater numbers of women were visible in public spaces at all times of day and night, 'reclaiming' the streets through collective presence.

Licensed Leisure and Crime

Criminologists have long been curious about the relationship between different spaces and crime. Since the 1920s, criminologists have been concerned with understanding not only who commits crime and who is victimised, but also where crime occurs. The Chicago School, in particular the work of Shaw and McKay (1942) is often cited as one of the first major schools of thought to specifically examine the spatiality of criminal offending and victimisation. This early work was particularly interested in where offenders lived and socialised and identified criminogenic zones in urban areas of Chicago.

Through analysis of police recorded crime data and victimisation surveys, a significant body of work has focused on mapping the incidence of crime in order to examine causal effects and develop effective responses to reduce crime. Often described as ecological or situational crime research, this work has documented the socio-spatial elements and distribution of crime. It reveals that crime is not evenly distributed; patterns and concentrations of crime vary by crime type, but large urban areas have the highest levels of recorded violent and acquisitive crime (e.g. see ONS, 2018d; National Centre for Victims of Crime, 2014). However, it is not just the static space that is of concern to contemporary criminologists. Rather, it is the social organisation of spaces, and the socio-cultural constructs within them, which provides environmental opportunities for crime and victimisation (Felson & Cohen, 1980).

In recent decades, both criminology and leisure studies have been interested in the relationship between, and incidence of, crime, 'deviance' and leisure spaces. As Smith and Raymen (2016, p63) note, 'the study of 'leisure' is perhaps one of the central preoccupations of the social sciences'. This has typically focused on the problems associated with specific leisure spaces, such as public parks, skateboarding parks and nightlife venues, and has often been concerned with young people, the lower classes and the collective threat of association. In this context, leisure has been problematised and the negative features and consequences of both the spaces, and the activities within those spaces, have been the focus of much of this work. As Measham (2004a, 2004b) points out, 'the 'problem of leisure' has been a familiar and persistent concern in UK society back to Victorian times, particularly regarding young

people engaging in drinking, drug use and a range of behaviours commonly categorised as ‘anti-social’ or ‘hooligan’ (Pearson, 1983).

Unsurprisingly, night-time leisure has been a central concern in this literature, having grown rapidly over the last few decades to occupy a prominent, even dominant, position within the urban cityscape. In post-industrial Britain, the urban NTE has been a legitimate focus of social and economic growth illustrated by the liberalisation of licensed leisure, the introduction in the notion of ‘24 hour’ party cities in 1990s Britain and the normalisation of ‘determined drunkenness’ (Hadfield and Measham, 2009; Measham, 2004a, 2004b; Measham and Brain, 2005). By attracting visitors back to the city at night, these spaces were transformed into an evening economy contributing to urban regeneration and economic growth (Van Liempt et al., 2014). These spaces are argued to form ‘an important part of identity for young consumers, characterised by a near universal adherence to intoxication and the suspension of the moral regulation and behavioural norms of the day-time’ (Smith and Raymen 2016, p.69). Kavanaugh (2015) describes NTE venues within the city downtown as premier destinations for young people looking to interact in the pursuit of hedonism and sexual courtship.

However, as Van Liempt et al (2014) note, this initial optimism about the benefits of the NTE has been displaced by growing concern about the commercialisation of these spaces, dominated by big branded names, the homogenisation of nightlife on offer, the exclusion of lower-class and non-white consumers and environmental impacts of gentrification. Moreover, within these spaces, aggression and violence is common. In fact, studies have found that pubs and nightclubs are the most likely location for violent incidents between (primarily young) males (Leonard, Quigley & Collins, 2002; Winlow and Hall, 2006). For Van Liempt et al. (2014, p.408), the concentration of violence and anti-social behaviour in and around nightlife areas is not surprising, as these spaces are often ‘emotionally charged spaces offering many chances for the transgression of social norms that are taken for granted during the day.’ They provide the hotspots for violent crime and anti-social behaviour with recognised flashpoints created by overcrowding, intoxication and demand for public transport, communications and fast food outlets (Tuck, 1989).

Thus the historical 'problem of leisure' came to be symbolised by the contemporary NTE with competing tensions from the loosening of licensing restrictions and rapid growth of the city-centre NTE fuelled by a 'revolution' in licensed leisure that included increasingly cheap alcohol, extended hours and a growing diversity of outlets, leading to growing concerns about young adult binge drinking in the early 2000s, at least in Northern Europe (Measham and Brain, 2005). Measham (2004, p.337) noted how 'popular cultural worlds may be sanctioned and regulated whilst concurrently being problematised and criminalised.' This echoes the early 'foundational' work of Chicago School Scholars that 'targeted cabarets, taxi-dance halls, roundhouses and red-light districts as hotbeds of commercialised sex, gambling, bootlegging and organised crime' (Grazian, 2009, p.908). Since then, there has been a growing interest in offending, victims and incidents of crime (Bottoms, 2007). Most recently, however, there has also been a shift in rhetoric, with nightlife in urban cities viewed as important cultural and socio-economic contributions (Grazian, 2009), combined with a recent fall in young adult alcohol consumption and a shift towards alternative pursuits in leisure time and contemporary urban space (Conroy and Measham, 2019; Measham, 2008a).

Kavanaugh (2015, p.240) argues that

> *emerging leisure economies are double-sided. While on one hand, they provide new opportunities for entrepreneurship and service sector employment, enable disposable spending, and so revitalize cities economically, on the other hand, they define leisure in ways that reproduce gender inequality, constrict individual behaviour to ensure market compliance and hedonistic forms of consumption, and so give rise to specific types of violence that they do little to effectively regulate or discourage.*

Grazian (2009) shares these views, arguing that the romantic nostalgia held by urban ethnographers such as Olderberg (1989) who saw nightlife as a social leveller, rendering social inequalities temporarily irrelevant, is more of a dream than a reality. Grazian argues that, in the 'neoliberal metropolis that characterises urban entertainment districts' gender differences and sexual harassment of women within these scenes is normalised (2009, p.910). In fact, research confirms that gendered inequalities have been designed in to the cultural

and social structures of the NTE and are reinforced through the heteronormative practices of some venues operating within the NTE.

For Dobbs et al (2003), Winlow and Hall (2006), Kavanaugh (2015) and other criminologists, the violence that occurs in nightlife contexts cannot be separated from broader societal structures. Indeed, Kavanaugh (ibid, p.250) argues there are 'subterranean convergences' between the 'value systems of individuals who participate in violence, the context where the violence plays out and the wider culture that permits such contexts to flourish'. This wider (Western) culture is where risk, violence, casual sex and alcohol consumption is celebrated within certain social groups. Kavanaugh argues that the young, middle-class patron, the primary consumer of US neoliberal commercial nightlife, is seeking to 'transcend the normative constraints of their mundane routines' but they become 'constrained by another set of normative expectations: the intensely gendered regime of commercial nightclubs' (p.252). In many ways, Kavanaugh is reflecting symbolic interactionist theories of gender and crime, which situate gender and sexuality 'within the mundane activities of social life' (Jackson & Scott, 2010, p.2). The following section will examine existing understandings of gender and sexuality in nightlife, particularly licensed leisure spaces.

Gender, sexuality and licensed leisure

Leisure and urban studies scholars, sociologists and feminist geographers have been concerned with the ways gender, sexuality and space are constructed, shaped and (re)produced in NTE spaces for the last three decades. Pilcher (2011, p.233) argues that, by examining women's 'participation in sexualised leisure spaces, we can begin to analyse the intersection of geographies, gender, sexualities and space'. As described earlier in this chapter, one of the key areas of interest for criminologists and leisure scholars researching the NTE has been explaining male on male violence and anti-social behaviour within the NTE. Although the role that alcohol plays in contributing to the incidence of violence has occupied much of the research, the relationships and intersections between gender, sexuality and masculinity have been central to developing understandings. The sexualised, hypermasculine and heteronormative structure of much of the NTE has provided a conceptual framework to understanding the highly gendered nature of these environments. It is a 'point of fact' that

women and men have historically experienced much nightlife space as distinctly and overtly gendered (Grazian, 2009, p.912). Thus, as others have noted (e.g. Nicholls, 2016) licensed leisure spaces within the NTE represent an interesting arena in which to explore some of the ways in which gender, space, safety and risk are inextricably linked.

Leisure spaces associated with the NTE, particularly drinking venues such as bars, pubs and clubs, 'have generally been highly gendered as masculine, with a limited range of 'respectable' drinking spaces and alcohol products aimed at women (Griffins et al., 2012, p.186)'. The consumption of alcohol, particularly excessive drinking, has 'long operated as key markers of masculinity' whereas women's consumption of alcohol has traditionally been viewed as unfeminine (Griffin et al., 2012, p.186; see also Hey, 1986; Measham, 2004b, 2008b, 2010). In the context of commercial nightlife venues, alcohol consumption has traditionally been 'organised around a sexualised normative structure' (Kavanaugh, 2015, p.248).

Although there are now larger numbers of women accessing increasingly diverse licensed spaces, with the new female drinker specifically targeted by the 1990s alcohol industry (Measham and Brain, 2005) and female clubbers an integral part of the differently gendered nightlife space of raves and dance clubs (Henderson, 1993, 1997; Hunt et al, 2010; Hutton, 2004, 2006; Measham 2004b; Measham et al, 2001) much of the NTE continues to be gendered and sexualised. This is evident in what Grazian (2009) describes as the feminisation and sex segregation of the nightlife industry. For example, in the British context, women continue to hold disproportionate numbers of lower paid and casual 'service' jobs within the industry, including bar work, waitressing, and dancing/performing. Women may be part of the 'package' offered to male customers and venues draw upon the physical attractiveness of women and the 'sexual magnetism' (Grazian, 2009, p.912) of female service staff who may be required to 'do gender' through sexualised femininity characteristic such as tight and revealing clothing and eroticised behaviours. Thus, bars, pubs and clubs can be hyper-sexualised spaces where women perform hyper-sexual forms of heteronormative, racialised and classed femininity, expressed through a particular 'look' or behaviour for the benefit of the male consumer. Griffins et al. (2012) suggest that, In order to successfully negotiate these spaces, women must conform to a new form of hyper-sexual femininity, in which they are

independent, but not feminist, get drunk with men but not 'like men' and look and act sexy for men's enjoyment but distance themselves from the 'drunken slut' (De Visser & McDonnell, 2011 cited in Griffins et al., 2012).

In other words, many women's experiences of nightlife spaces are still structured by assumptions about their (hetero)sexual availability (Sheard, 2011) and they remain subject to the male gaze, sexual harassment and assault. For example, security staff at nightclubs and bars have been found to contribute to the culture of masculinity and sexism which is often present in bars (Hobbs et al, 2003; Tomsen, 1997; Winlow and Hall, 2006). Consequently, Nicholls (2016) argues that the heteronormativity of nightlife spaces continues to act as a form of governance to police and control women, and the gender differentiation within the NTE continues to define and preserve the culture of these urban spaces. Similarly, Brookes (2011, p.334) has argued 'issues surrounding women's access to leisure activities and their use of public space are heightened when they seek to socialise in bars, pubs, and clubs; women who enter these spaces are subject to heightened (wanted or unwanted) male attention'.

Licensed leisure spaces are frequently associated with sexual harassment and violence against women and to a lesser extent, men, particularly those linked to the NTE, which are situated within the 'sexualised city' (Hubbard and Colosi, 2015). In the UK, a Drinkaware study (2015) reported 54 per cent of women and 15 per cent of men aged 18-24 experience sexual harassment on a night out. Mellgren et al. (2018) found that sexual harassment of Swedish women occurred frequently at clubs and restaurants, and, although many of these incidents would not meet the legal definitions of a crime, the regularity of these low level incidents contribute to what Kavanaugh (2015) describes as a 'cultural atmosphere' where unwanted sexual attention becomes accepted as a normal part of being in public places. For Kavanaugh (2015), the culture of commercial nightlife further reinforces the sentiments of hypermasculine performance and heterosexual power among patrons, creating a space that facilitates and legitimises harassment and degradation of women.

This can result in leisure spaces, particularly alcohol venues in the NTE, being viewed as 'risky spaces' by women. As Green and Singleton (2006, p.854) note, leisure is a key arena for risk-

taking behaviour and it is deeply gendered, both in terms of the spaces and places that young women occupy and their behaviour within such spaces. Such behaviours are also overlaid by differences of age, class, sexuality, 'race', ethnicity, (dis)ability and culture, although some of these differences are less well acknowledged than others (i.e. disability discrimination is only just starting to be recognised and responded to in the NTE and is significantly behind other areas on inequality). Unsurprisingly then, leisure spaces, as with other public spaces, are perceived in terms of their safety and possible threat of male violence (Scraton and Watson, 1998). Risk-taking (e.g. excessive alcohol consumption, substance misuse, violence and anti-social behaviour) is generally encouraged among male consumers and viewed as a marker of masculinity, whereas women may be expected to avoid engagement with risky places and behaviours. As Yang, Khoo-Lattimore and Arcodia (2017, p.90) point out, in general, women's risk-taking behaviour is more likely to be negatively evaluated compared to men's, because risk-taking is associated with the construction of masculinity, whereas risk aversion is a desirable trait of femininity (Elsrud, 2001; Campbell, 2005; Laurendeau, 2008; Olstead, 2011).

Scraton and Watson (1998) further problematise the concept of risk. They argue that risk is often positioned as an active choice and part of the excitement and pleasure of leisure consumption, but this is a heteronormative, masculine understanding that obscures the reality of 'risk' for female consumers. They argue that, for women, risk is not a choice but rather an inherent feature of leisure environments, which much be constantly assessed and managed. It is not an exciting part of the experience, but rather an unavoidable element. Regardless of the increase in women's involvement in the NTE, there is a prevailing assumption that by occupying these spaces women are inherently vulnerable to male violence and have unnecessarily placed themselves at risk (De Crispigny, 2001).

It is against this backdrop of gendered licensed leisure space dating back to Victorian England that alternative, counterculture and transgressive leisure space has developed, including raves and dance clubs since the late 1980s (Thornton, 1995), and music festivals since the 1960s (Clarke, 1982) to which we now turn our attention.

Conceptualising gender and crime at UK music festivals

A festival can be loosely defined as an organised series of events typically in one location and with a unifying theme. Such definitions bely the vast range of different types of festivals, however, with at least seventeen different 'types' of festival identified by Stone (2009), varying in size, style and patron demographics. Some of this range has been explored within the multidisciplinary field of Festival Studies – the empirical, theoretical and policy analysis of festivals – that developed over the last two decades to explore a wide range of festival spaces. Studies on, for example, art festivals (Quinn, 2005; Waterman,1998), folk festivals (Quinn and Wilks, 2017), local community festivals (Clarke and Jepson, 2011), and food and wine festivals (Yuan et al, 2008), have developed our understanding of the growing diversity and popularity of festivals and their significance in terms of social relations, economic investment and community cohesion. Whilst there are criminological contributions considering issues of transgression, hedonism and intoxication, discussed above, the gendering of festival space and issues of safety and violence within festivals have not been a primary concern to those working or researching this space (Gisbert and Rius-Ulldemolins, 2019).

The authors have turned their attention to this issue with data collection at UK music festivals. Music festivals may be held in tents erected in large fields where patrons camp over the course of several days (often referred to as green-field festivals) or can be city festivals on one or more days with or without camping and located in local parks, existing buildings or in city streets. The disparities in defining and counting such festivals is evident in that UK Music (2017) estimates there were around 230 festivals in 2016 attended by more than 4 million people; whereas CGA (2019) estimates that there were 700 UK music festivals attended by 7.1 million customers in 2018; and Mintel (2018) estimates that there were 918 UK festivals in 2018, more than double that of a decade earlier.

Regardless of their composition, music festivals, as with much of the music, events and hospitality industries, are widely acknowledged as heavily gendered/male dominated businesses, although women's participation, as artists and as production staff, has increased significantly over the last decade. For example, in 2016, 60 per cent of UK music festival visitors were female, an increase from 37 per cent in 2015 (Statista, 2016). This gender shift mirrors changes across the broader licensed leisure industry.

Whilst music festivals may share some characteristics with other licensed leisure spaces, there are also significant differences, since music 'festivals are unique in their size, location and layout: are held at both day and night time, are relatively infrequent, of long duration and large crowd size' (Dilkes-Frayne, 2016, p.1). Since music festivals first emerged in their current form in the late 1960s (Clarke, 1982), their core appeal to their young adult customers – selling images of liminality, temporary freedom and 'time out' from everyday life (Pielichaty, 2015) – have led music festivals to be associated with crime, 'deviance' and transgression, at least to the wider public. To the onlooker, transgressive festival behaviours can range from increased drinking, drunkenness, drug use and nudity, through to anti-social behaviour and violence.as well as countercultural rebellion or resistance, a carnivalesque inversion of social norms, and a 'Peace, Love, Unity, Respect' (PLUR) ethos (shared more recently associated with the rave scene) that reached mythic status in festival folklore such as with Woodstock festival in the US in 1969.

As music festivals have expanded both in numbers and capacity, and given their conceptualisation as sites of transgression, so the gendering of music festivals and the social construction and performance of gender within them are emerging as areas for fertile academic interest (e.g. Bhardwa 2013; Motl, 2018; Pernecky et al, 2019). Tokofsky (1999 cited in Pielichaty, 2015, p.239) suggests that 'gender features centrally in festival environments because of a perceived opportunity for freedom and liberation; therefore, the chance for festival goers to play at the edges of gender seems obvious'. Green (1998) concurs that music festivals can be viewed as sites for 'gender work' where masculinities and femininities are constructed and produced.

Within criminology and sociology, in the last decade researchers have turned their attention to large music festivals and dance club tourism as sites of transgression, liminality and intoxication (e.g. Bhardwa, 2013; Hesse and Tutenges, 2008; Morey et al, 2014; Ruane, 2017; Turner, 2018). Within this emergent field of Festival Studies, however, studies have rarely extended to an examination of gendered risks and experiences at music festivals and this has been undertaken predominantly by students (e.g. Motl, 2018; Pernecky et al, 2019; Pielichaty, 2015). This is in stark contrast to coverage of music festivals in the online and print media,

which devotes significant space to these events each year, including reporting on incidences of sexual harassment, violence and crime more broadly.

Studying gender, safety and crime at UK music festivals: setting a research agenda

It is clear that music festivals, like other leisure spaces, are gendered spaces and the experiences of music festival-goers in relation to crime and safety is differentially gendered. However, given that the promise of liminality, transgression and 'freedom' is a distinctive characteristic of music festivals (illustrated in festival names such as *Secret Garden Party*, *Lost Village* and *Wilderness*), we anticipate additional complexities in unpicking the role of gender in festival crime and therefore additional value in understanding sexual violence in festival space.

We recently undertook the first UK study to examine safety and crime at music festivals, including specifically focusing on the gendered differences between men and women who attended a festival in the previous 12 months (Bows, King & Measham, forthcoming). The main study surveyed 450 self-selecting festival-goers online about their perceptions of safety and experiences of crime at UK music festivals. This included 285 women respondents. The findings from their responses, revealed that most women feel relatively safe at festivals. Respondents reported feeling usually safe (50.9 per cent) or always safe (35.1 per cent). Very few respondents felt rarely (2.8 per cent) or never (0.4 per cent) safe. A recent study of perceptions of safety and sexual violence at Australian music festivals similarly found that the vast majority of participants (men and women combined) reported that they either 'usually' (61.5%) or 'always' (29%) feel safe at music festivals (Fileborn et al., 2018, see also Fileborn et al in this volume). However, despite female respondents reporting an overall feeling of safety at music festivals, various personal, social and environmental features increased or reduced their feelings of safety along with some spaces within festivals that they felt particularly unsafe. Furthermore, the two key concerns of women regarding crime and safety onsite were sexual harassment and sexual assault. Overall, a third of women reported experiencing sexual harassment and eight per cent sexual assault at a UK festival in the previous 12 months.

This resonates with feminist geographers' analyses of gender and space and studies on gender and fear of crime discussed earlier. A YouGov (2018) study highlighted the prevalence of sexual harassment at festivals in the UK, with 43% of female festival goers under the age of 40 experiencing unwanted sexual behaviour. However, this is a vastly lower level than that reported in a recent US survey, where over 90% of women said they had been sexually harassed at a music festival or music gig/venue (OMMB, 2017). The picture is yet more complex when comparing to figures for other leisure spaces, such as bars and clubs, where a DrinkAware (2015) survey found that 54% of women aged 18-24 experience sexual harassment on a night out. Whilst sexual violence at music festivals hits the headlines every summer, academic research on the issue is scarce and there remain major gaps in knowledge.

Historically, festivals have been understood as liminal spaces providing temporary freedom and 'time out' from everyday life (Bhardwa, 2013; Pielichaty, 2015). As a result, and mostly through sensational media coverage, they have become associated with crime, deviance and transgression, in particular excessive drinking and drug taking. Hayward (2002) notes how transgressive leisure and carnivalesque pleasure offer an opportunity for escapism not just from boredom but also from the insecurity and 'hyper-banalization' of everyday life in which people feel increasingly over-controlled, not just by agents of the state but also in a cultural and economic sense. However, the extent to which festivals are genuinely radical and countercultural is questionable, given the commodification of transgression and the intense control of contemporary festivals (Haydock, 2015). According to Turner and Measham (2019) festivals represent carnivalesque realms that merge opportunities for transgressive pleasure with elements of risk, danger and subversion. Within this ethereal context, consumed with a sense of ambivalent well-being, their participants' perceptions of risk were distorted, leading to changed behaviour, most notably patterns of increased alcohol and drug use that were atypical of their consumption in everyday life.

This raises a number of questions for the emergent field of Festival Studies. Given the mass commodification of festivals, often into Instagrammable 'brandfests', to what extent can music festivals (still) really conceptualised as 'wild zones'? Are festivals safe spaces to engage in risky behaviour? What is the relationship between crime, leisure and transgression within music festivals? What are the risks and what is the crime picture within these spaces? How

does all of this impact on festival-goers' perceptions of crime and safety? If, as Turner and Measham (2019) have found, festival-goers have altered perceptions, behaviours and assessments of risk, how does this impact on intimate relationships and sexual violence? If festivals are an area of atypical behaviour compared to everyday life, but are still gendered, how does this impact on people's experiences of sexual violence? How do women 'do gender' at festivals? If festivals are 'wild zones', do women alter their behaviour (their 'safety work') in different ways to other spaces (Vera-Gray, 2018)? How do men view women within festivals and how is all of this reflected in the responses of onsite services? Along with their endurance as a site of pleasure and pilgrimage for millions of people every summer, this makes music festivals an interesting and important arena to study further.

Conclusion and future directions

This chapter has considered what is currently known about gender, leisure space and violent crime and how existing conceptual understandings of gender and space, particularly licensed leisure spaces, may provide useful starting points for further investigation of gender and crime at music festivals. We have noted that despite the significant body of research on gender, violence, licensed leisure and the night time economy (NTE), and despite music festivals occupying an increasingly prominent position in young adult social calendars, there is comparatively little criminological research within the field of Festival Studies on largescale commercialised music festivals and patterns and prevalence of violent crime within them. Drawing on existing work in the social sciences, and the emerging findings from a study we conducted examining safety and crime at UK music festivals, we have argued that the distinct spatial, temporal and cultural features of music festival sites require specific empirical and conceptual consideration; existing understandings of leisure spaces and gender may provide useful wider contexts but the findings from these fields do not necessarily translate to festival spaces. We suggest instead that criminological research on gender and sexual violence is incorporated within the broader field of Festival Studies to further the empirical and conceptual interrogation of music festivals and that it includes an intersectional analysis of consumption, risk and experiences within these spaces, incorporating not only gender, but also race, class, sexuality and (dis)ability in order to develop comprehensive understandings of sexual violence and harassment within festival spaces.

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